

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 26. (Previously Added) A method comprising:

    sending a request for information from a central computer to a remote database, the central computer monitoring and operating a smart appliance sharing a physical environment with the central computer, the remote database being maintained and periodically updated by a seller of the smart appliance;

    receiving the requested information from the remote database at the central computer, the information being related to the smart appliance; and

    transmitting a control signal from the central computer to the smart appliance, the control signal being generated by the central computer based on the information received from the remote database, wherein the control signal functionally operates the smart appliance.

Claim 27. (Previously Added) The method of claim 26, wherein the seller of the smart device comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler of the smart device, and a retailer of the smart device.

Claim 28. (Previously Added) The method of claim 26, wherein the central computer requests the information from the remote database is using an Internet connection.

Claim 29. (Previously Added) A machine-readable medium having stored thereon data representing instructions, which, when executed by a processor of a central computer cause the central computer to perform operations comprising:

sending a request for information from the central computer to a remote database, the central computer monitoring and operating a smart appliance sharing a physical environment with the central computer, the remote database being maintained and periodically updated by a seller of the smart appliance;

receiving the requested information from the remote database at the central computer, the information being related to the smart appliance; and

transmitting a control signal from the central computer to the smart appliance, the control signal being generated by the central computer based on the information received from the remote database, wherein the control signal functionally operates the smart appliance.

Claim 30. (Previously Added) The machine-readable medium of claim 29, wherein the seller of the smart device comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler of the smart device, and a retailer of the smart device.

Claim 31. (Previously Added) The machine-readable medium of claim 29, wherein the central computer requests the information from the remote database is using an Internet connection.

Claim 32. (Previously Added) A central computer system comprising:

- a communications device to be coupled to a network to enable the central computer to communicate with a remote database and a smart appliance;
- a processor coupled to the communications device, the processor to:
  - send a request for information from the central computer to the remote database using the communications device, the central computer monitoring and operating the smart appliance sharing a physical environment with the central computer, the remote database being maintained and periodically updated by a seller of the smart appliance;
  - receive the requested information from the remote database at the central computer using the communications device, the information being related to the smart appliance; and
  - transmit a control signal from the central computer to the smart appliance using the communications device, the control signal being generated by the processor based on the information received from the remote database, wherein the control signal functionally operates the smart appliance.

Claim 33. (Previously Added) The central computer system of claim 32, wherein the seller of the smart device comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler of the smart device, and a retailer of the smart device.

Claim 34. (Previously Added) The central computer system of claim 32, wherein the communications device comprises a modem.

Claim 35. (Previously Added) A method comprising:

- collecting usage information from a smart appliance at a central computer sharing a physical environment with the smart appliance;
- sending a request for maintenance information from the central computer to a remote database, the remote database being updated by a seller of the smart appliance;
- receiving the requested maintenance information from the remote database at the central computer, the maintenance information related to scheduled repairs of the smart appliance; and
- determining whether the smart device is due for a scheduled repair using the received maintenance information and the collected usage information.

Claim 36. (Previously Added) The method of claim 35, wherein the seller of the smart device comprises one or more of a manufacturer of the smart device, a wholesaler of the smart device, and a retailer of the smart device.

Claim 37. (Previously Added) The method of claim 35, wherein the usage information comprises one or more of:

an average length of time the one or more smart devices has been in operation over a period of time;

a number of occasions the one or more smart devices has been in operation over the period of time;

a number of times maintenance was performed on the one or more smart devices over the period of time; and  
types of maintenance operations that were performed on the one or more smart devices over the period of time.